



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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**IND102572.E**

India: The Kuki National Front (KNF); its principal activities and whether it operates outside of Manipur state; government efforts to combat the KNF and availability of state protection for those targeted by the group (2005 - 2007)

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International publications focusing on dissident movements note that the Kuki National Front (KNF) was founded by Ranco Thangboi Kuki in May 1988 with the purpose of establishing a separate homeland for the Kuki population (SATP n.d.; *Revolutionary and Dissident Movements of the World* Feb. 2004, 174). According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), the KNF split into different factions in 1995, with one splinter group naming itself the "presidential faction," which subsequently split into the "Samuel faction" and the "Zougam faction," and another faction naming itself the "military council" (SATP n.d.). The SATP reports that the KNF presidential faction "remains the most powerful of all the factions and has claimed to be the 'real KNF'" (ibid.).

Uncorroborated information provided by the SATP notes that the KNF, including all above-mentioned factions, counts on approximately 400 to 500 members (ibid.). Moreover, the SATP states that the KNF, without specifying which faction, carries out its activities mainly in the districts of Churachandpur, Chandel, Tamenglong and Senapati in the state of Manipur and "funds its activities primarily through extortion and collection of 'protection fees' from the civilians in its areas of operation" (ibid.; see also Indo-Asian News Service 13 June 2007). The SATP also provides details on a number of incidents involving the KNF from 1996 to 2007, two of which are mentioned below, including encounters between security forces and the KNF, cases of extortion, abduction and murder as well as information on types of weaponry used by the KNF (n.d.).

Information on whether the KNF operates outside of its base of operations in Manipur state could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Regarding state efforts to combat the KNF, various news sources have reported on ceasefire agreements between certain KNF factions and the government, the capture or surrender of KNF members, and public security reactions to violent confrontations involving KNF factions (*Hindustan Times* 7 Oct. 2005; Indo-Asian News Service 13 June 2007; *The Statesman* 31 May 2007).

In October 2005, two news sources reported that Indian army counter-insurgency operations had reportedly convinced various Kuki dissident groups, including the KNF "military council," and the KNF "Samuel faction" to agree to an armistice in order to consider "formal negotiations with the government for peaceful settlement of all issues" (*Hindustan Times* 7 Oct. 2005; *The Statesman* 7 Oct. 2005). Without specifying which faction, *The Times of India* mentioned in December 2005 that the KNF had signed a "suspension of operations" (17 Dec. 2005).

No further information about armistice agreements signed by KNF factions could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In July 2006, *The Assam Tribune* mentioned that government action on insurgency activities in Manipur state had resulted in, among other things, the incarceration of six KNF members in the period of 2001 to 2006 (10 July 2006).

In August 2006, *The Statesman* reported that the kidnapping and killing of the president of the All Manipur Students Union, Chandel district committee by the KNF "military council" had compelled authorities to suspend international trading and impose an "indefinite curfew" in the border town of Moreh on the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur (16 Aug. 2006). The student union president was slain for reportedly "working against the interest" of the KNF "military council" (*The Statesman* 16 Aug. 2006).

In 2007, various news sources reported on killings associated with Kuki insurgent groups, including KNF factions in March, May and June 2007 (BBC 14 Mar. 2007; *The Statesman* 31 May 2007; *Press Trust of India* 12 June 2007). In March 2007, *The Telegraph*, as reported by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), noted that five "heavily armed militants, suspected to be from the ...(KNF) and Kuki National Army (KNA)" were killed and one left wounded when the rival Kuki factions engaged in a gun battle in Manipur's Senapati district (14 Mar. 2007).

In May 2007, *The Statesman* reported that five members of the KNF "Zougam faction" were slain by their own members after being accused of desertion (31 May 2007; see also SATP n.d.).

In June 2007, the *Press Trust of India* reported that four members of the KNF "president faction" were slain in a confrontation with government security forces in the Senapati district (12 June 2007; see also SATP n.d.). In a follow-up article of 13 June 2007, according to information provided by a defence spokesman to the Indo-Asian News Service, government security forces were "'tipped off by locals that a group of rebels were moving in the area and trying to carry out extortions'."

Also in June 2007, the *Imphal Free Press* outlined the Manipur government's efforts to combat the more than 20 insurgent groups operating in the state (19 June 2007). In particular, the *Imphal Free Press* noted that the Manipur government is planning to supply the latest sophisticated weapons and vehicles at the earliest to the Manipur police commando units engaged in counter-insurgency operations in the state" (19 June 2007). Among the insurgent groups mentioned, the KNF "president faction" reportedly claims to have 150 members and 50 unidentified weapons (*Imphal Free Press* 19 June 2007).

Information about state protection efforts for individuals specifically targeted by the KNF could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

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*The Times of India*. 17 December 2005. "Manipur CM's 'Donation' to Rebels." (Factiva)

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Publications consulted:** *Extremist Groups: An International Compilation of Terrorist Organizations, Violent Political Groups and Issue-Oriented Militant Movements; Political Handbook of the World*.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International (AI), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), International Crisis Group (ICG), Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), United States (US) Department of State, World News Connection/Dialog.

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